



DEPRESSION-ERA ROSES

Jean Lewis

In the 1932 *American Rose Annual*, editor J. Horace McFarland commented that, “In a gratifying way the economic depression that has come to restore civilization to sanity has made little impression upon our membership. Indeed it has rather had a quickening effect upon rose interest. Some men and many women are thinking less of bridge and golf and display and more of the rose, to their own restorative good.”

Despite the Great Depression, the 1930s were a time of great experimentation in rose breeding. Hybrid Teas, already well established, continued to be the most popular and numerous roses, while several other classes made significant advances in new directions. Breeders’ efforts largely focused on several trends: using the new yellow roses to create new colors and to improve the disease resistance of these roses; increasing flower size, especially of clustering roses; and developing repeat-blooming varieties of climbing roses.

Pedro Dot successfully built on the painstaking work of Joseph Pernet-Ducher to produce yellow roses, and introduced a rainbow of gloriously flame-colored roses throughout the 1930s. Some of these roses range dramatically in intensity from pastel to hot orange blends, for example 'Duquesa de Peñaranda' and 'Federico Casas'. 'Catalonia', 'Condesa de Sástago', 'Angels Mateu', 'Girona', and 'Maria Peral' show more intense coloration. With 'Baby Gold Star', 'Golden Sástago', and 'Joaquin Mir', Dot achieved true, deep yellows.

Polyanthas experienced enormous popularity during the Depression, and hundreds were introduced. They have the same dwarf characteristics as the Miniature Chinas—a craze at the end of the eighteenth century—but are far hardier, and could be applied in a novel way, as borders. The trend towards breeding larger flowers resulted in the Floribunda or Hybrid Polyantha class. The showy, large-blossomed Floribundas eclipsed the Polyanthas in popularity.

The first repeat-blooming large-flowered Climber, 'New Dawn', introduced in 1930, was a major breakthrough, although remontancy was not established for this group until after World War II. Others quickly followed—Michael Horvath's 'Captain Kidd' and 'Long John Silver' (both 1934); Peter Lambert's 'Rudolf von Benningsen' (1932); and 'Climbing Hermann Robinow' (1934).

Rev. Joseph Pemberton and Lambert bred a spate of Hybrid Musks just about the time of the first World War. Lambert, John Bentall, and Wilhelm Kordes continued breeding this class in the 1930s. The well-known small-flowered Hybrid Musks 'Ballerina', 'Belinda', and 'Buff Beauty' all debuted between 1936 and 1939, as did large-flowered Hybrid Musks with rich colors and handsome, glossy foliage, such as 'Eva', 'Skyrocket', 'Rostock', 'Sangerhausen', and 'Erfurt'.

Our current economic depression, in hindsight, clearly developed over the past several decades. The boom times foster creativity, which can perhaps sustain us



LEFT: 'Angele Pernet' (photo by Gregg Lowery)

ABOVE: 'Radio' from *Star Roses*, 1938



through the hard times if we heed McFarland's words. "A new rose costs no more than a box of candy, and not nearly so much as the average theatre ticket," he wrote in the 1930 *American Rose Annual*. "Let us put rose-planting on somewhat the same basis. Let us yield to the lure of the new things and not be tied down to a 'preferred dozen' of the world's best-loved flower, missing the thrill that the blooming of the 'novelties' always brings."



Large Flowered Climbers and Hybrid Polyanthas

TOP ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: 'Breeze Hill', 'Captain Thomas', (photos by Gregg Lowery); 'World's Fair', (from *Wayman*, 1939); 'Kirsten Poulsen', 'Frau Astrid Spaeth' (photos by Phillip Robinson)

Hybrid Musks

CENTER ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: 'Heideroslein' (photo by Bernard Loubert); 'Ausonius' (photo by Gregg Lowery); 'Buff Beauty', 'Vanity' (photos by Phillip Robinson)

Pedro Dot Hybrid Teas

BOTTOM ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: 'Mari Dot', 'Federico Casas', 'Golden Sástago' (photos by Phillip Robinson); 'Angels Mateu' (from *McFarland's Roses of the World in Color*, 1938)



